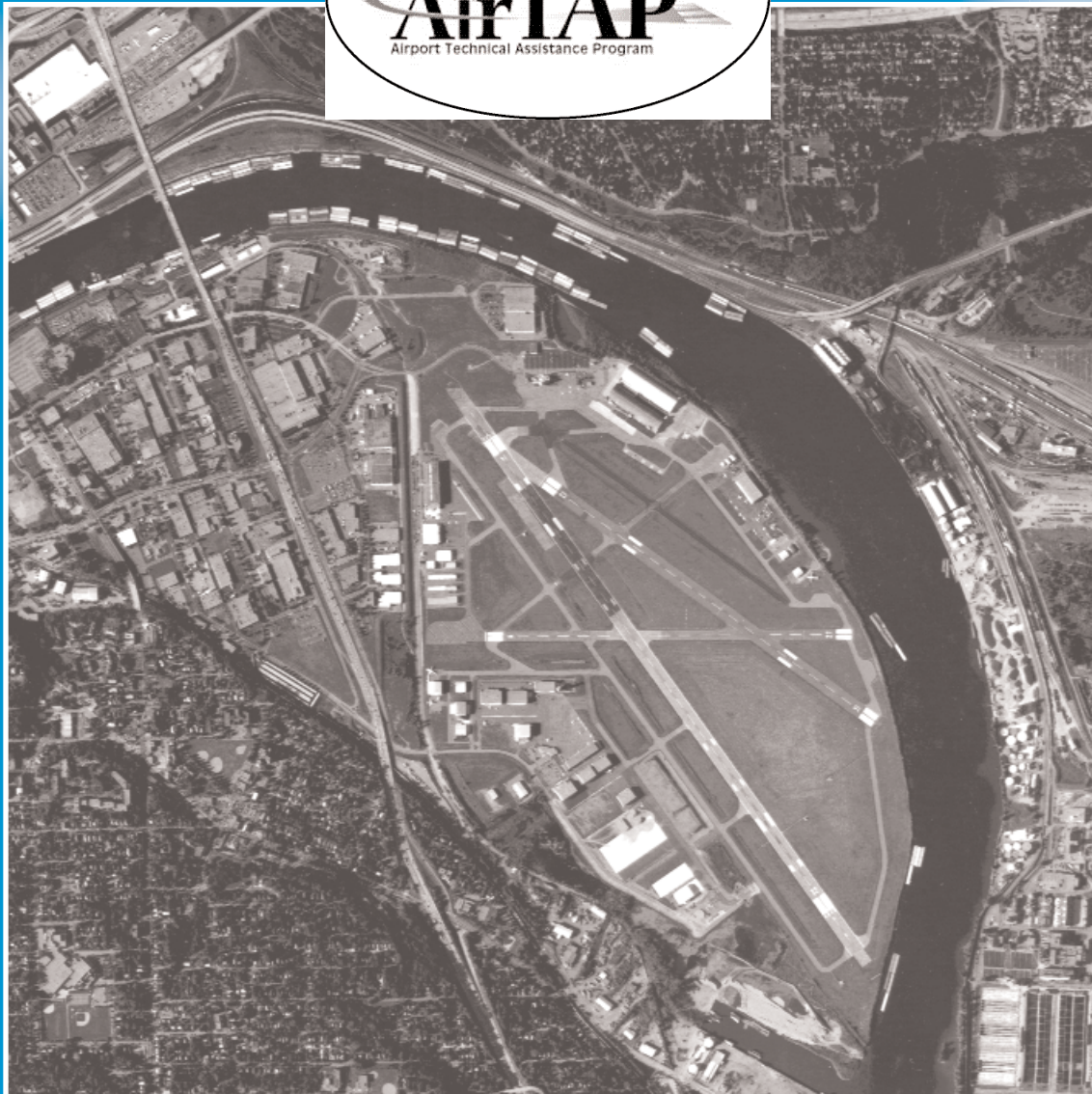


A Marketing Toolkit for Minnesota Airports

FLYING HIGH

*Showing the value of
Minnesota airports to their communities*



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



CENTER FOR TRANSPORTATION STUDIES



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Inside this toolkit

- *Results of a study that shows the impact of Minnesota airports and airfields*
- *Easy-to-implement ideas that will help you build support for your airport operations*
- *A ready-to-use presentation in PowerPoint and a ready-to-hand-out fact sheet, as well as a script with talking points*
- *Other information and resources*

FLYING HIGH

Take off now

Each day, airports throughout Minnesota play a vital role in transporting passengers and goods, often in the most timely and efficient way possible. Yet, as those involved in facilitating air travel understand all too well, challenges to sustaining the level of air travel in the state continue to increase.

What do the major influences on Minnesota airports look like?

Although situations differ from airport to airport, most airports in the state face growing concerns about the following issues:

- **Economics.** Many airports struggle with trying to increase revenue during tough economic times or with generating enough revenue to cover costs or meet obligations.
- **Awareness.** Community members may not know about the location of an airport or airstrip in or near their city. If they are aware, in many cases, they do not realize the full extent of airport services and the impact of those services on their community and their lives.
- **Environmental forces.** Changes in transportation patterns and choices, in funding for airports, in technology, and in other conditions all impact airports and their future.
- **Local priorities.** City councils and county officials juggle a number of local priorities, and those priorities compete for the attention of city council officials and county commissioners.
- **Safety and security.** Concerns over the safety of air travel remain, and the industry is undergoing significant changes. Airports throughout the state must adapt as new regulations and ways of doing business reach the regional and local level.

How might these influences impact the future of individual airports, as well as air travel, in the state?

Whether economics or air travel regulations, the changes will affect the way Minnesota airports do business.

- Airports may experience a loss of business and a loss of revenue because of tight economic conditions and changes in transportation preferences by the traveling public.
- As local governments weigh priorities, airports without visibility in their communities may find it harder and harder to compete for support.
- With greater concerns about air travel, airports find themselves with an expanded responsibility to further address safety and security issues.

The industry is undergoing one of its most significant periods of far-reaching change, which continues to impact even the smallest of operations.

What can you do?

Change brings both opportunity and challenges.

Airports that recognize environmental factors are in a better position to prepare for and respond more effectively. Keeping informed about industry and other environmental changes can make all the difference in developing solutions.

Knowing the issues is important, but taking action is even more important. Airports in the state must be prepared to make their case—to show the value of operations to the local community and to generate community awareness and support.

Whether airport manager, airport employee, or aviation enthusiast, you can help spread the word about the value of aviation to your local community. Those involved in airport operations play an important role in promoting their airport.

Designed to assist airports in promoting their operations, this toolkit includes information and ideas that airports can use to make their case and help turn their concerns into opportunities.

Did you know?

The state's airports generate more than \$10 billion annually in economic activity.

LAND ON YOUR FEET

The contributions of airports quickly add up

Just how much does the presence of an airport add to the local economy?

As it turns out, quite a bit.

In 1997, the Office of Aeronautics at the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) conducted a study to help answer that question.

What did the study examine?

Wilbur Smith and Associates examined the economic impact of Minnesota's airports by evaluating:

- All public-use airports—a total of 137, including 15 commercial service designated airports and 122 general aviation service airports, with 7 designated as relievers
- Hundreds of firms that provide aviation services at the airports, including airlines, fixed base operators, and aircraft repair providers, among others
- Commercial airplane passengers
- Non-direct sources, such as off-site firms that provide goods and services to commercial and general aviation passengers; federal and state assistance programs that support airport development, maintenance, and safety; and firms that rely on efficient air transportation cargo service

The study divided airports into four categories: commercial service airports, non-commercial but key airports, intermediate airports, and landing strip airports.

What did the results reveal?

The study took a close look at the economic impact of six commercial airports, three non-commercial key airports, eight intermediate airports, and three landing strip airports.

The results show significant value, ranging from an average economic activity of \$61 million annually for a commercial service airport to \$217,000 for a landing strip.

Economic activity takes into account direct and indirect impacts, as well as the added economic value that results from those impacts (see "There are impacts, and there are impacts," page 3).

Airports also generate earnings and jobs, which, in turn, support local businesses. The amount of the contribution depends on the size of the airport:

Commercial Service Airports

Economic activity (range): \$1.3 million to \$168 million

Economic activity (average): \$61 million

Airport earnings (range): \$409,000 to \$54 million

Airport earnings (average): \$13.1 million

Jobs generated (range): 20 to 3,061

Jobs generated (average): 750

Non-Commercial Key Airports

Economic activity (range): \$1.8 million to \$5.5 million

Economic activity (average): \$3.4 million

Airport earnings (range): \$556,000 to \$1.6 million

Airport earnings (average): \$1.1 million

Jobs generated (range): 20 to 74

Jobs generated (average): 54

Intermediate Airports

Economic activity (range): \$224,200 to \$6.9 million

Economic activity (average): \$1.7 million

Airport earnings (range): \$65,000 to \$2.1 million

Airport earnings (average): \$508,000

Jobs generated (range): 3 to 92

Jobs generated (average): 23

Landing Strip Airports

Economic activity (range): \$65,300 to \$393,000

Economic activity (average): \$217,000

Airport earnings (range): \$64,300 to \$123,900

Airport earnings (average): \$70,000

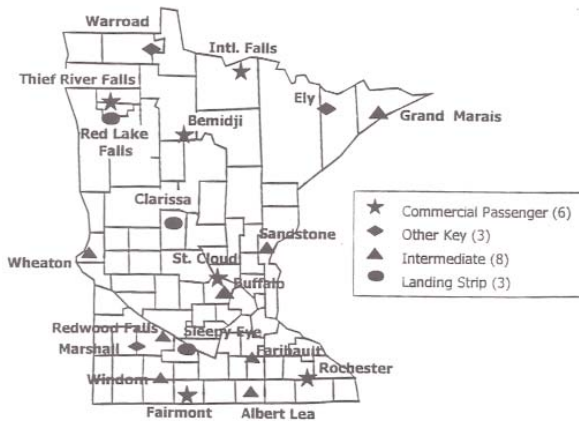
Jobs generated (range): 1 to 6

Jobs generated (average): 4

Did you know?

A landing strip airport in Minnesota—one of the smaller players in Minnesota's aviation system—generates an average of \$217,000 annually in local economic activity.

Exhibit 4
AIRPORTS STUDIED



What about the total impact?

As part of the study, researchers visited 20 airports to collect data on aircraft operations, based aircraft, tenants, jobs, expenditures, visitors, and related businesses. They calculated total impact for both visited and non-visited airports.

The following table summarizes those findings in addition to the findings of a Metropolitan Council survey of seven reliever airports to the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) and the findings of the Metropolitan Airports Commission economic impact study for the activity at MSP.

There are impacts, and there are impacts
The study took into account three different types of economic impact:

- Direct impacts, or the expenditures of firms that provide aviation services, such as airlines, FBOs, aircraft servicing, flight schools, and other operational services, such as maintenance and construction. For example, when an aircraft lands and purchases fuel at the airport, the purchase of fuel is considered a direct impact.
- Indirect impacts, or the expenditures that result from the use of aviation services, such as the money that air passengers spend in the region on meals, lodging, rental cars or taxis, entertainment, and travel agent commissions. For example, when the passengers who land buy lunch in a restaurant in town, the purchase of meals is considered an indirect impact.
- Multiplier effects, or the added economic value that occurs from both direct and indirect expenditures. For example, airport workers buy products at local stores and those stores use the money to buy additional inventory.

How can I learn more?

For a complete report of the study, contact the Office of Aeronautics at 222 E. Plato Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55107, 800-657-3922.

<u>Impact Source</u>	<u>Economic Activity</u>	<u>Earnings</u>	<u>Jobs</u>
Wilbur Smith Assoc. (20 Greater Minnesota airports)	\$298,562,900	\$94,997,700	5,280
Met Council (7 Relievers)	\$277,084,300	\$101,998,300	3,745
MAC (MSP)	\$9,489,400,000	\$2,781,700,000	99,461
State Aviation System Plan	<u>\$307,881,600</u>	<u>\$97,502,900</u>	<u>5,289</u>
Total Minnesota	\$10,372,928,800	\$3,076,198,900	113,775

NAVIGATE YOUR WAY

Finding ideas that make a difference in your community support

Why invest in spreading the word?

Airports can only benefit from building community support and involvement. The community that understands the value and contributions of airports is more likely to stand behind an airport during good and tough times.

Airport managers and staff also can share their enthusiasm for aviation with children and adults through educational activities. It can be fun to develop and participate in programs that inform and educate the public and community leaders.

Where do I start?

It's not hard to begin taking action or to pursue ideas that you haven't considered before.

- Build your case with relevant information. This toolkit offers you data that show the value of airport operations to local communities and information that you can use to make the case for your airport. It's a great place to start and return to for additional inspiration.
- Select the strategies and outreach activities that you feel will work for your situation. This section includes a number of activities for consideration. These activities can help increase awareness about your airport and build community support. Take a closer look, and decide which activities make the most sense for you.

For example, if you face competition for funding, you may want to arrange meetings with city council members, or make a presentation to the city council.



- Use the tools to support your efforts. This toolkit includes several ready-to-use pieces: a presentation that summarizes the study about the economic value of the state's airports; a script that will guide you through the presentation; and a fact sheet that you can distribute as is (see page 7 for additional detail).

You may use all these pieces in making presentations, or you may choose to send a letter with the fact sheet to your city council members as a way to share the study's findings with them.

- Talk to other airports. Airport managers throughout the state are using a variety of tactics to serve and involve communities. Look for examples of those tactics in the folder pocket's Case Studies sheet. Where applicable, the case studies include the names and phone numbers of individuals for you to contact for additional information.

What are some examples of ideas?

The following list describes activities that airports can use as a basis for their outreach efforts. There are many possibilities, so start with an activity that makes the most sense for you and your airport. You'll find that once you start, one step builds momentum for the next activity.



Community Involvement

- *Develop a local airport club that includes pilots, airport users, and other citizens.*
Many airport clubs start with local pilots who want to fly but may not own an aircraft. Anyone with an interest in aviation can join an airport club—from people who simply love aviation to pilots. You can start a club by holding an introductory meeting and leading a few meetings until the group can operate on its own. See the Case Studies sheet for an example.
- *Identify non-pilot community leaders to help promote the airport.*
Find supporters for your airport—whether city council members, county board commissioners, business leaders, or other leaders. Ask them to speak at events and help support the airport in other ways. Use resources in this toolkit for presentations and talking points.
- *Develop an airport marketing committee.*
Ask pilots and other supporters to meet with you and brainstorm ideas for promoting the airport and aviation. If appropriate, ask them to volunteer for activities that interest them.
- *Offer the use of your airport conference room to local groups.*
Opening your conference room doors for public meetings helps introduce the community to the airport. Just coming to the airport helps increase awareness about the airport.

Presentations

- *Gain political support from local officials.*
Local officials might not be familiar enough with aviation to understand the need for funding and support. Take the time to meet city council members or county board commissioners and to understand their concerns. Use the materials in this toolkit—the presentation, accompanying script, and fact sheet. You also may want to invite them for a visit to the airfield. Show them the results of improvement projects and discuss future plans.
- *Volunteer as a speaker to groups.*
You can help increase awareness of your airport and its impact on your community by speaking to civic groups. Members of your airport marketing committee also may volunteer to make presentations.
- *Make phone calls and write letters.*
You or volunteers may want to consider writing letters and personally contacting community leaders to make your case. An insert in the folder pocket includes a sample letter.



Publicity

- *Develop a simple name and logo.*
A name and logo help community members better identify the airport. It can be as simple as you want. See Case Studies sheet for an example.
- *Regularly publish and distribute an airport newsletter.*
Write and distribute a one-page update to keep community members informed about airport news and upcoming events. Also send the newsletter to the local newspaper. See Case Studies sheet for an example.
- *Promote your airport through the media.*
Write and distribute articles to local or neighborhood newspapers. You also may want to advertise in the local newspaper or aviation magazines, such as the *Minnesota Flyer*, as a way to increase public awareness. Some airports use billboards. See Case Studies sheet for examples.
- *Use promotional materials.*
Order promotional materials and distribute them throughout the community. Or purchase promotional products for resale or distribution to airport users. Search for promotional products by type or price at www.creativeadsolutions.com. You also may want to produce a poster or print bumper stickers.
- *Showcase airport projects or activities with store window displays.*
Check with local stores to see if they are open to displaying information about your airport, whether posters, T-shirts, or pictures.

Special Events

- *Organize a special event or air show.*
Plan an open house at your airport on a weekend afternoon. Rope off areas where community members can walk and look at aircraft. You may want to personally welcome visitors to the airport, conduct tours, or ask pilots and aviation enthusiasts to speak. Distribute information or promotional materials to visitors. Remember, however, to keep safety in mind at all times.
- *Work with local school children and teachers.*
Contact your local school and talk to a principal or teacher about preparing a unit on airports or aviation. Mn/DOT Aeronautics also can help (see page 8). Visit classrooms and distribute Mn/DOT coloring books and any appropriate promotional items, such as pencils. Sponsor a coloring contest. See Case Studies sheet for an example.
- *Showcase construction projects with tours.*
Making some improvements? Bring small groups to see the project and explain what the project will mean to the airport and community. (Remember, safety first!)
- *Conduct safety training and events at the airport.*
Consider hosting special events at the airport. Invite the fire department or local law enforcement to the airport for drills or for training sessions. See Case Studies sheet for an example.



How can the Adopt-An-Airport Program help?

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) Office of Aeronautics began the Adopt-An-Airport Program to encourage community involvement with the state's public-use airports.

As part of the Adopt-An-Airport Program, an airport agrees to put itself "up for adoption" by civic and community groups. In return, members of those groups volunteer their time and efforts to support the airport.

Airport managers or operators meet with representatives from the adopting group and agree on the activities for volunteers. These activities vary and depend on the age, skills, abilities, and expertise of the adopting group or individual. Most often, volunteers assist with beautification of airport facilities. They work to improve the appearance of the airport by planting flowers, picking up debris along access roads and fences, mowing and trimming natural areas, and painting and maintaining airport buildings.

The Minnesota Adopt-An-Airport Program increases awareness of the advantages and economic impacts of airports on the local community. The program also gives community members the opportunity to learn about aviation and aviation careers and to understand airport activities.

Both the airport and its volunteer groups receive signs to show their participation in the program. Airports can place the signs in a conspicuous location, such as at the entrance to the airport. The signs help promote the program to the public and recognize the efforts of the volunteer groups.

Any public-use airport in Minnesota is eligible to participate. For information or to participate in the Adopt-An-Airport program, please contact the Adopt-An-Airport coordinator at 651-297-7652.

Feel free to try some or all or many of these ideas. Any of these activities will help you make greater connections with your community, which ultimately builds a stronger base of support.

Ready-to-use presentation shows impact of airports

This toolkit includes a presentation that you can use to show the impact of your airport. You'll find the presentation on the CD-ROM in a PowerPoint format, as well as a script with talking points to accompany it.

Much of the content of the presentation is based on the results of the study described on page 2.

The presentation begins by describing the possible impacts of airports, along with some examples of those impacts. It then explains the three measures of impact—economic activity, earnings, and related jobs—and details the results of the study. The presentation also includes information from the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) video, "Local Airports Access to America." The video outlines the value that general aviation airports bring to a community. For a copy of the video, contact AOPA at 800-872-2672.

You can use the presentation tools in several ways. You can make slides and develop your own script. You can take the slides and use the talking points to guide you through the presentation. You can supplement the presentation by incorporating your own slides—tailored to your local needs and circumstances. Or, if you don't feel comfortable presenting, you can share the presentation with another airport supporter who might be willing to speak with groups.

You'll also find a fact sheet in the pocket that you can copy and distribute as a handout at presentations or use to accompany a letter to local officials. It summarizes the key presentation points.

Did you know?

Many Minnesotans have never visited their local airport, even if they have lived in a particular community their entire lives.

CHART YOUR COURSE

Taking advantage of helpful resources

What is AirTAP?

The Airport Technical Assistance Program, or AirTAP, is an innovative program that offers assistance for public-use aviation personnel throughout the state. AirTAP is sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Office of Aeronautics, in partnership with the Minnesota Council of Airports and the Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota.

One AirTAP training session, "Airport Project Funding and Development," was designed to assist airport staff with initiating, funding, and managing airport capital improvement projects. This workshop also discussed how to assess the economic impact of an airport on its local community. The workshop looked at the Wilbur Smith study, as mentioned previously in this toolkit, and other economic impact studies that could be useful when calculating the economic impact of an airport. A copy of the summary of the "Airport Project Funding and Development" workshop can be found on the AirTAP web site at www.airtap.umn.edu.

AirTAP also conducts sessions at the MCOA Aviation Symposium in April. During the general AirTAP session, participants contribute their ideas and suggestions for AirTAP training and outreach efforts. AirTAP developed this toolkit in response to feedback from aviation personnel. At the 2001 MCOA Symposium, AirTAP presented a session titled "Marketing Your Airport" that helped airport personnel understand the goals and purpose of marketing their airport to the local community.

The AirTAP Steering Committee guides AirTAP activities and includes representatives from all types of airports and from the aviation industry. For a list of steering committee members, see the Flying High insert in the folder pocket.

To find out all that is available and what's new with AirTAP, check out its web site at www.airtap.umn.edu.



What are additional resources?

- Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA)—Fly-A-Leader
What: In this program, airport personnel or representatives invite decision makers to fly over their city and view the airport.
Where: www.aopa.org/info/fly-a-leader2.pdf
- AOPA—What's Your Airport Worth?
What: This program explains ways to conduct an impact study for your own airport.
Where: www.aopa.org/asn/apsup03.html
- AOPA—Public Relations Plan for Airports
What: This article contains information about presentations, public meetings, and other ways to reach members of Congress and other public officials.
Where: www.aopa.org/asn/apsup02.html
- Educational Resources for Kids
What: The Mn/DOT Office of Aeronautics makes available coloring books, puzzles, experiments, and crafts for use by children.
Where: www.mnaero.com. Also visit www.faa.gov/education/resource/kidcornr.htm
- AOPA home page: www.aopa.org
- Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) home page: www.faa.gov
- Mn/DOT Aeronautics home page: www.mnaero.com
- American Association of Airport Executives (AAAE) home page: www.airportnet.org
- Wisconsin Aeronautics home page: www.dot.state.wi.us

Whom can I contact for more information?

AirTAP/Center for Transportation Studies
612-626-1077
www.airtap.umn.edu

Mn/DOT Office of Aeronautics
651-297-1600
www.mnaero.com